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ABSTRACT

This document presents one module in a set of training resources for trainers to use with parents and/or professionals serving children with disabilities; focus is on the role of parents in interagency collaboration. The modules stress content and activities that build skills and offer resources to promote parent-professional collaboration. Each training module takes about 2 hours to deliver. The module guide has eight sections: a publicity flyer, topic narrative, overview, trainer agenda, activities, summary, bibliography, and evaluation. Introductory information explains how to use the modules including conducting a needs assessment, planning the training, selecting the training module, implementation, evaluation, and followup. Objectives of this module are: (1) become familiar with the concept of interagency collaboration, (2) identify the key components of interagency collaboration, (3) examine the barriers to and benefits of interagency collaboration, (4) explore the role of parents in interagency collaboration, and (5) recognize and evaluate successful interagency collaboration strategies. A bibliography identifies three books, magazines, or other resources. (DB)

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INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION: THE PARENTS ROLE

California State Department of Education
Bill Honig, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Sacramento, CA, 1988

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California State Department of Education
Special Education Division
Program, Curriculum and Training Unit

Presents a Module on:

Interagency Collaboration: The Parents' Role

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Materials Adapted From:

Interagency Collaboration: Making Magic Happen
by Eleanor Lynch and Patrick Harrison

The File Drawer:
A Resource Guide for Consultants to Community Collaborative Groups
by Infant/Preschool Special Education Resource Network

1988

This module, as well as thirteen others, were produced under the direction of Karl E. Murray and Susan Westaby of the Program, Curriculum and Training Unit, Special Education Division, CA State Department of Education. The modules are being field-tested throughout 1988. During this field-test stage, they are available by sending $ 5.00 for each module (includes tax and mailing) to: Parent Training Modules, CA State Department of Education, P.O. Box 944272 - Room 621B, Sacramento, CA 94244-2720. Make checks payable to Parent Training Modules.

INTRODUCTION

The Parent/Professional Training Modules have been developed to serve as a core set of training resources for trainers to use primarily with groups of parents. Some of the trainings were designed specifically for combined groups of parents and professionals, and all the trainings can be adapted for use with parents or professionals as separate or combined audiences. The training modules in the series focus on content and activities that build skills and offer resources to promote parent-professional collaboration to ensure quality education for all students with disabilities. There are fourteen training modules in this series:

Parent Professional Collaboration
Parental Involvement
Stress and Support in the Family
Coping with Loss and Change
Parent Support Groups
An Effective Community Advisory Committee
Community Advisory Committee Leadership Training
Communication Skills
The Individualized Education Program: Rights and Responsibilities
Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment
Training for Professionals Working with Families
Parent Professional Collaboration in Planning for Employment
Transition Planning
Interagency Collaboration: The Parents' Role

Each training module has eight sections:

Flyer
Topic Narrative
Overview
Trainer Agenda
Activities
Summary
Bibliography
Evaluation

Within each of these sections there are these materials:

Flyer - The Flyer highlights what participants can expect to learn by attending the training. It can be personalized for each training by adding date, time, and location in the appropriate spaces.

Topic Narrative -- The Topic Narrative contains content information specifically for the trainer. Trainers use the information to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of the training module.

Overview -- The Overview contains the goals and objectives for the module; and the content and presentation strategy for each activity contained within the module.

Trainer Agenda -- The Trainer Agenda contains details of trainer and participant activities, materials and media. It is a suggested agenda that trainers can personalize to fit their style and the specific needs of the participants. A few modules that deal with sensitive or difficult content have Trainer Tips included in the Agenda section.

Summary -- The Summary contains highlights of all the content information presented in activities within the training. The Summary was designed to provide information to prospective participants and to workshop planners.

Bibliography -- The Bibliography contains the names of books, magazines and other resources that were used as references in developing the training modules and may serve as a list of suggested reading materials for trainers as well as participants.

Evaluation -- The Evaluation contains questions that directly assess the objectives of the module as well as some general questions to evaluate the usefulness of materials and trainer effectiveness.

The Parent/Professional Training Modules have been designed to be a flexible and expandable resource for trainers of parents and professionals. It can be housed in binders or in file folders and rearranged as needed. Trainers are urged to add articles, resources and other materials that will make each training reflect their individual style and meet the needs of the participants.

HOW TO USE THESE TRAINING MODULES

Conduct a Needs Assessment:

Gather as much information as you can about the groups that you will be working with. The following types of questions may help:

Does the group meet regularly or is it assembled specifically for the purpose of this training?

What does the group want to accomplish? Does it have a stated goal? Are there a set of outcomes that the group wants to achieve?

Who is involved in the group (agencies and organizations)?

If the group is an ongoing group, how is the group organized? (officers, executive committee, standing committees, task groups, etc.)

What has the group already done? What training has the group already received?

What is the group working on now?

How does the group get things done?

Has the group conducted a needs assessment to determine the group's need for training and the training topics of interest?

Plan the Training

Typically, this is a dialogue between the trainer and the client. Often, the client will have a specific topic or activity in mind. Sometimes additional topics will be suggested during the needs assessment process when the trainer probes to get more information. The trainer can share a list of module topics and/or several module summaries to aid the client in selection of a topic(s) from the series.

Select the Training Module

The Parent/Professional Training Modules offer a wide selection of topics and activities. The trainer can select the module that deals with the topic chosen by the client.

Review the Training Module

The module provides the core activities and a suggested trainer agenda. The trainer can adjust both to reflect their individual style and the needs of the client.

Identify Additional Resource Materials

The trainer can add articles, resources, and other materials to the core training module. Often a trainer will introduce local resources or pertinent sample materials.

Deliver the Training

The Parent/Professional Training Modules are best delivered by a training team of a parent and a professional. Collaboration is modeled by the team as each member of the team displays unique perspectives, abilities and knowledge as they enhance each others presentation styles.

Evaluate the Training

Evaluation is an essential element of any training. Each module includes an evaluation that assesses the specific objectives of the module and the usefulness of materials. These evaluations can assist the trainer in refining the module content and modifying presentation style, if needed.

"Follow-Up" the Training

It is a good practice to follow-up any training with a personal visit, letter, or a phone call. The trainer may wish to keep a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of participants to facilitate follow-up. The follow-up usually consists of discussion about how the training may have impacted the client's personal or professional life. Clients may express the desire for further training and/or materials and resources.

Interagency Collaboration: The Parents' Role

(For All Interested and Involved Parents and Professionals)

You, as a participant, will learn about:

- the concept and key components of interagency collaboration
- barriers to interagency collaboration
- benefits of interagency collaboration
- the role of parents in interagency collaboration
- how to recognize when interagency collaboration is working

Day and Date:

Time:

Location:

For More Information, Call:

Please Come

Interagency Collaboration: The Parents' Role

Topic Narrative

Why Establish Community Collaborative Efforts?

Context for Community Collaboration

Families and service providers are often frustrated by the structure of the service system:

- o Complex system. Many programs, agencies and professionals (public and private) are needed and involved in serving children with handicapping conditions and their families.
- o Shared responsibility. No agency has sole responsibility for coordinating all services that children and families may need.
- o Overlapping mandates. Publicly funded services may have legislated requirements to provide services to the same population of children and families.
- o Resources are limited. It is unlikely that a single program can directly provide the entire set of services that a child and family are likely to need or use.
- o Duplication. Most programs gather similar background information and conduct their own diagnostic or programmatic evaluations. Assessment and program planning are often duplicated, even though records may be shared. Most agencies provide some case management services.
- o Time delays. Intake, assessment, eligibility determination and program planning are usually done before service begins. Each agency tends to do this separately. Not only is there a substantial lag between identification and service, but if a student or a family is referred to another agency for a service, this time consuming process begins again. For example, young children who are just being identified and their families must go through this process many times in a short period of time.
- o Many transitions. From the time children and their families enter the service delivery system, many transitions will occur. There are different eligibility criteria and age restrictions that may apply. When a child reaches the upper age limit, a public agency may be required to discontinue service and transfer responsibility for service to another public agency which may (or may not) find the child/family eligible.

Benefits of Collaborative Groups

Community collaborative groups believe that their efforts have a significant impact on the service system in the following ways:

- Services for children and families are improved. Participating agencies and professionals know more about services in their community and have the contacts to secure services in a more timely fashion. Their interrelationships also increase the ease of communication and case coordination.

- Limited resources are extended. Collaborative groups have been able to extend resources in two ways. First, groups have brought additional funds into the community through collective grant and fundraising activities. Second, groups share information in a more trusting way that reduces each agency's costs for such things as assessment.

- Staff competence and expertise is improved. Collaborative groups often pool information about training events in the community and collectively sponsor training conferences for both professionals and parents.

- A forum for joint planning and problem solving is established. Community collaborative groups serve as a place where parents and professionals can share information about problems they are experiencing. Most collaborative groups engage in ongoing needs assessment activities (both formal and informal) and establish work groups to study community problems and identify actions for the group as a whole to solve the particular problem.

- A family focused service delivery system is fostered. Equal participation of key parents and parent organizations in the community collaborative group is seen as an important factor in the success of collaborative efforts. Parent-professional partnerships in needs assessments and service projects have resulted in more effective services.

Formation of Collaborative Groups

Community collaborative groups have formed for a variety of reasons. The following are some typical scenarios:

- Catalytic issue. A key program in the community is about to go out of business. Staff of the program and others meet to discuss the problem and join together to find a creative new way to keep that service in operation. The people who are involved in that activity are successful in finding a solution and discover through their joint efforts that they can have an impact on the community. They identify other problems that their combined efforts can resolve. They invite others to join with them and begin the development of a more formalized, visible group.

- Catalytic program or person. A new staff member in a community agency is interested in the services for infants and preschoolers and the people who are responsible for providing them. She/he makes an effort to meet with each agency and to talk about ways that they might be able to work better together. Over a period of time, a small group of people who have similar interests and visions emerges. That group decides to invite others to join with them to begin solving some of their common problems.

- Interagency climate in funding and regulations. In this community, program people have collaborated informally for a long time. A lot of these activities have been quiet, unofficial agreements, for fear that top level administrators would not approve or support these arrangements. However, people have become more frustrated with the cumbersome nature of the service system, particularly now that resources have become more restricted. Now there seems to be greater approval of interagency collaboration at the state level. Programs are more likely to get new funding if they can demonstrate interagency collaboration; so key people in the community programs approached their administrators to get support to work together. They invited representatives of other agencies to come together with the express purpose of developing a community collaborative group.

Facilitating Factors

Despite the reasons for the formation of the collaborative effort, collaborative groups have identified the following key factors which helped them:

- Key influential leader. There was someone in the community that had the energy, vision, and 'clout' to involve others in the effort. This person is seen as a host or hostess who writes the initial letters, makes the phone calls, arranges for the meeting space, sets the agendas and facilitates the initial meetings.

- Neutral forum. In many communities, there has been a concern that one agency is trying to "take over." It has been helpful to find a neutral meeting place and an interagency umbrella for the meetings.

- Agencies are generally networked. It has been easier to establish collaborative groups when there is a general climate of mutual respect among key individuals and with consumer groups.

- Existence of a common problem or issue. Groups have found it easier to attract participants when there is some concrete problem or issue that most people agree needs to be worked on.

- Potential sources of outside support. Two types of external support have been identified as helpful. Funding or the potential for funding of needed activities has helped groups to focus their efforts. The availability of external consultants, materials and recognition have also helped collaborative groups.

Adapted from: Drouin, C., Brekken, L., Eastman, M., Wolfe, S. *The file drawer: A resource for consultants to community collaborative groups.* Sacramento, CA.: Infant/Preschool Special Education Resource Network, 1987.

Overview

The goal of this module is for participants to become aware of the components, benefits of and barriers to interagency collaboration, and to explore the role parents can play in the establishment and implementation of interagency collaboration.

Objectives

1. Become familiar with the concept of interagency collaboration.
2. Identify the key components of interagency collaboration.
3. Examine the barriers to and benefits of interagency collaboration.
4. Explore the role of parents in interagency collaboration.
5. Recognize and evaluate successful interagency collaboration strategies.

Objective Number	Suggested Minutes	Content	Presentation Strategy
	10	Introductions, Objectives and Agenda Review	
	20	Interagency Collaboration The Story of Jenny	Lecturette and Large Group Discussion
1	10	Key Components of an Interagency Collaboration Process	Lecturette
2	20	Collaboration Players	Role Play with Large Group Observation and Debriefing
	10	Break	
3	10	Barriers and Benefits of Interagency Collaboration	Large Group Brainstorm and Information Sharing
4	20	Parents' Role in Interagency Collaboration	Lecturette, Individual Activity and Large Group Sharing
5.	10	Evaluating Interagency Collaboration	Individual Activity and Large Group Sharing
	10	Conclusion and Evaluation	
	120		

Suggested Trainer Agenda

WORKSHOP TITLE: Interagency Collaboration: The Parents' Role

DATE: _____ PAGE: 1

PRESENTERS: _____

CLIENT: _____

GOAL: To become aware of the components, benefits of and barriers to interagency collaboration, and to explore the role parents can play in the establishment and implementation of interagency collaborations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Become familiar with the concept of interagency collaboration.
2. Identify the key components of interagency collaboration.
3. Examine barriers to and benefits of interagency collaboration.
4. Explore the role of parents in interagency collaboration.
5. Recognize and evaluate successful interagency collaboration strategies.

TIME	WHO	TRAINER ACTIVITIES/CONTENT	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES	HANDOUTS MEDIA
10 minutes		Welcome Introductions Objectives and Agenda Review Display Objectives and Agenda on Chart Paper	Listen	Chart Paper Pens Tape Chart of Objectives and Agenda
20 minutes		Interagency Collaboration - The Story of Jenny Activity/Handout/Overhead 1A and 1B Display Overhead 1A Distribute Handout 1B Refer to Overhead 1A and define interagency collaboration as an introduction to Handout 1B. Read "The Story of Jenny " to participants. The story serves as a catalyst for discussion. Have participants answer the question "Why Collaborate?"	Look, Listen	Overhead 1A Overhead projector Screen Handout 1B

Suggested Trainer Agenda (continued)

TIME	WHO	TRAINER ACTIVITIES/CONTENT	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES	HANDOUTS
		Record participants' answers on chart paper. Summarize responses and highlight key reasons for collaboration: - multiple agency roles, functions, and eligibility requirements are often confusing, - no one agency has sole responsibility for coordination of services, - services may be overlapping, - resources are limited, - duplication of services, - time delays, - many transitions, - increase chance that service will be truly interdisciplinary.	Contribute to Discussion	Chart Paper
10 minutes		<u>Key Components of an Interagency Collaboration Process</u> Activity/Handout/Overhead 2A and 2B Lecturette Distribute Handout 2A Display Overhead 2B Use Handout 2A as basis for lecturette on the key components of interagency collaboration. Refer to Overhead 2B during Lecturette. In developing interagency collaboration, it is important to realize that most successful interagency groups have recognized key components in their collaboration: - mission, - structure (and group function), - membership.	Listen, Look	Handout 2A Overhead 2B

Suggested Trainer Agenda (continued)

TIME	WHO	TRAINER ACTIVITIES/CONTENT	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES	HANDOUTS
		When these components are in place, interagency groups are ready to do "their" work: - needs assessment, - action planning, - implementation, - evaluation.		
20 minutes		<u>Collaboration Players</u> Activity/Handout 3 Role Play with Large Group Observation and Debriefing Distribute Handout 3 at end of activity Prepare task cards from Handout 3 for role players Select four volunteers from participants to enact a role play. Each role player will be given a task card with a separate situation and assignment from Handout 3, and asked to read/study the content in preparation for the role play. Instruct large group to observe role play. Set-up role play as follows: "You will be observing a meeting of community representatives: a representative from the family, education, social services, and a private, nonprofit service provider. They have come together to learn about each other and begin the process of interagency collaboration." Seat role players in front of large group in a semicircle. Begin role play by asking each player to tell a little about themselves to the other role players. Role players should be encouraged to bring "life" to their roles and remember to try and accomplish their secret assignments. Allow 5-7 minutes for role play.	4 Role Players Observe Role Play	Task Cards

Suggested Trainer Agenda (continued)

TIME	WHO	TRAINER ACTIVITIES/CONTENT	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES	HANDOUTS
		Debrief observers by asking the following questions: 1. What did you see happening between people? 2. Did you feel people were open and clear in communicating? 3. Were there any barriers to communication? 4. Were there any personality issues that surfaced? 5. Any issues of turf or territory either spoken or unspoken? 6. Were people clear about what they could and could not do in their various roles? 7. Were people tolerant and flexible? 8. Were people willing "to give" in order "to get"? 9. Can you identify how children and families will benefit? Debrief role players by asking the following questions: 1. What was your secret assignment and did you accomplish it? 2. How did you feel? 3. Were others in the group supportive? 4. Did people ask questions about your situation, services, etc.? 5. Were you able to give something away to get what you needed? Distribute Handout 3 to any participant who would like a copy of the role play scripts. Conclude activity with some thought provoking statements about collaboration: - Nobody works at interagency collaboration unless there is something in it for them, - Getting agencies to collaborate is like getting two-year-olds to share toys, - Developing interagency collaboration is a lot like nailing grape jelly to a tree. In other words interagency collaboration is not easy.	Participate in Debriefing Answer Questions	Handout 3

Suggested Trainer Agenda (continued)

TIME	WHO	TRAINER ACTIVITIES/CONTENT	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES	HANDOUTS
10 minutes		Break		
10 minutes		<u>Barriers and Benefits of Interagency Collaboration</u>.		
		Activity/Handout/Overhead 4 Large Group Brainstorming and Information Sharing	Participate in Brainstorming	Wall Charts
		Post two wall charts; head one "Benefits", and the other "Barriers". Instruct participants to brainstorm some barriers and benefits to interagency collaboration. Record ideas on respective charts. Allow 5 minutes for this portion of the activity.		
		Distribute Handout 4 Display Overhead 4		Handout 4
		Summarize "Barriers and Benefits" by reviewing Overhead 4. Participants may want to make notes on Handout 4 of any additional ideas generated during brainstorming activity.		Overhead 4
20 minutes		<u>Parents' Role in Interagency Collaboration</u>.		
		Activity/Handout/Overhead 5A and 5B Lecturette Distribute Handout 5A Display Overhead 5B		
		Deliver lecturette using Handout 5A as a basis for content. Refer to Overhead 5B during Lecturette. Utilizing trainer knowledge and experience, elaborate on objectives. For example, in dealing with objective 1:	Look Listen	Handout 5 A
		- offer information about grants that you may be familiar with; bring an actual grant proposal to share; refer to RFPs (requests for proposals).		Overhead 5 E
		- discuss types of needs assessment techniques, such as surveys or questionnaires; share examples.		

Suggested Trainer Agenda (continued)

TIME	WHO	TRAINER ACTIVITIES/CONTENT	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITIES	HANDOUTS
		("The File Drawer" has samples of needs assessment documents, etc.)		
		Instruct participants to follow directions at the top of Handout 5A. Have them circle starred *objectives that they feel would help them accomplish the overall goal of interagency collaboration. Allow 2-4 minutes.	Circle Objectives	
		Ask participants to share some objectives they have identified that meet their own needs. Participants may want to focus on one or two choices and make a personal commitment to achieve these objectives.	Share	
10 minutes		Evaluation of Interagency Collaboration.		
		Activity/Handout 6. Individual Activity and Large Group Sharing. Distribute Handout 6.	Answer questions individually Share	Handout 6
		Allow 2-4 minutes for participants to read evaluation questions. Ask participants if interagency collaboration is working for them. Have participants share responses. Tie in participants responses from previous activity. Recall various objectives that were chosen by participants that would help fulfill these evaluation criteria.		
10 minutes		Conclusion.		
		Restate Objectives. Thank Participants. Distribute Evaluation/Handout 7.	Complete Evaluation	Handout 7

Interagency Collaboration
Activity/Handout/Overhead 1A
Lecturette and Large
Group Discussion
20 minutes

Interagency Collaboration

Interagency Collaboration is a group of professionals, families (parents), and service providers who come together in order to truly share and plan for resources throughout the community.

During this process, gaps in services, unnecessary duplications and areas of confusion are often identified and dealt with, resulting in better services for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Why Collaborate?

The Story of Jenny

Once upon a time in a community we've all visited, an expectant mother and father were sharing their dreams about the baby on the way. Like all first-time parents, they were alternately confident and overwhelmed; but most of the time, they were just excited about becoming parents. Then, the day that they had anticipated with such great joy finally came, but nothing turned out as they had expected. The doctor's and nurses' concern showed in their hushed tones in the delivery room. Shortly afterward, the mother and father got the news. "Although we'll have to confirm all this with tests, your baby has a handicap. She's not in medical danger. In fact, she's quite strong and healthy, but she will have problems thinking and learning. Everything will come more slowly for her. For now, the most important thing is for you to adjust to her just like any new parent. Take her home. Care for her. Love her. When you're ready, we can talk about what to do next."

After a while, the parents were ready for the next steps, and the doctor and nurse practitioner gave them the name of an agency to call. They called and got an appointment for an assessment for baby Jenny. It took several weeks to get in and the process was exhausting - questions, questions, questions! But if this is what must be done, then as good parents they would do it. Several weeks after the assessment, the agency called back to say that although Jenny was handicapped, she really wasn't handicapped enough for their services. They couldn't help until she was much farther behind in her level of development. They suggested that Jenny's parents call another agency that might help.

After another assessment and the same questions, questions, questions, this agency told them the good news first, then the bad. Yes, Jenny did qualify for their services, but there was a waiting list. It would be eight to twelve months before they could begin services. In the meantime, the family might want to see if another agency could at least provide some therapy. As good, but tired and frustrated parents, they called the third agency -- another appointment, another assessment, and more questions, questions, questions! This time, they did get some help. Jenny qualified for therapy once a week, but her parents had to drive her across town during their work hours for the half-hour sessions. Life went on like this for months -- referrals, assessments, long waits for service, or no service at all. Jenny's parents got more tired, more frustrated, and they began to ask why the system didn't work.

Source: From *Interagency collaboration: Making magic happen.* by Eleanor W. Lynch and Patrick J. Harrison (San Diego, CA: Department of Special Education, San Diego State University, 1986). Reprinted by permission of the authors.

Key Components of an Interagency Collaboration Process

Interagency collaboration is really a "process" by which a group of people can accomplish their purpose. The process usually consists of the following key components.

* **Mission**

  Establishing a mission for community collaborative efforts is one of the first steps in developing a group. It is the guiding principle from which all other aspects of planning and activity take place. Usually, a mission statement is idealistic. The following are some of the things that a group may want to include in their mission statement:

  - target group(s) which will benefit from the group's work,
  - geographic area included,
  - a statement about what the group seeks to accomplish,
  - a statement about the ultimate outcomes for the beneficiaries of the group's work.

* **Structure**

  Community collaborative groups have a number of choices about how to organize themselves. Often, the structure of a collaborative group is planned, but sometimes it just seems to emerge. Some structural considerations are:

  - leadership,
  - membership,
  - committees and task forces,
  - funding,
  - staffing,
  - outside facilitators and consultants.

  Just as with the structural elements of a community collaboration effort, the functions or regular activities of the group are related to the goals the group has established. Some group functions to consider are:

  - holding meetings,
  - developing or maintaining resource directories,
  - tracking or providing input to legislation and policy,
  - advisory committee to community projects,
  - impacting service delivery systems,
  - funding opportunities,
  - establishing community calendars,
  - case coordination - addressing specific cases with parent consent,
  - staff development to provide community training opportunities.

* **Membership**

The membership of a community collaborative effort is key to the success of the collaboration. If the group can attract and actively involve the right people in the group's mission, then the goals of the group are more likely to be accomplished. The following are some areas membership planners may wish to consider:

- restricted vs. open membership,
- level of authority,
- administrative support,
- attracting members,
- identifying a comprehensive list of prospective members,
- maintaining membership,
- orienting new members.

After a collaborative group has dealt with mission, structure, and membership, they are ready to do their work through :

* **Needs Assessment**

Needs assessments form the basis for planning the specific projects of the collaborative group. Collaborative groups conduct their needs assessments in a variety of ways. The needs assessment process can involve an extensive formal study or it can be a periodic group process. The needs assessment helps a group develop a common understanding of their community and select activities to address the needs identified.

* **Action Planning**

Action planning gives a group a concrete road map for addressing the needs they have identified. An action plan is an explicit written statement about specific activities the group will engage in to reach some specific outcomes that will resolve identified needs.

Action plans serve a variety of purposes. They provide the group with a focal point for planning "real work". They stimulate thinking and develop common understanding among the members of a group. Most important, action plans serve as a way of tracking a group's work and evaluating the impact of the collaborative effort.

* **Implementation**

Implementation is where the "real work" starts. This is the time when the proposals are written, the telephone calls made, the negotiations are conducted, the flyers are printed, etc. The hard part about implementation is making sure that all the jobs get done and that they get done on time. Conventional wisdom in community collaboration is estimate how much time it will take and multiply by four.

The biggest danger in implementation is to call on the same people over and over again. While it is tempting to call on the same key members to become involved in everything, groups need to recognize that they can exhaust their best resources. Sharing the work and leadership of group activities is good for the community. It provides visibility to new people and programs. It ensures community ownership of the effort. Sharing ensures that a few people do not burn out.

* **Evaluation**

As with any system innovation, collaborative groups have a need to find out if what they are doing is making a difference. The evaluation process can be used as a way of monitoring and improving the collaborative process, as well as looking at the outcomes of collaborative efforts, and perhaps justifying the needs for and benefits of such collaborative activities.

Collaborative groups may choose to conduct self-evaluation of their processes and achievements, or they may use an external evaluation consultant to provide them with more formal, impartial evaluation information.

Adapted from: Drouin, C., Brekken, L., Eastman, M., Wolfe, S. *The file drawer: A resource for consultants to community collaborative groups*. Sacramento, CA.: Infant/Preschool Special Education Resource Network, 1987.

Key Components of an Interagency Collaboration Process

Mission

Structure

Membership

Needs Assessment

Action Planning

Implementation

Evaluation

Collaboration Players

Role Play Scripts

Family

Your Situation: You are Mom or Dad. Mom and Dad have three children, ages 6 years, 2 years, and 3 months. Their 6 year old has Down's Syndrome. The family moved to the community six years ago just days after the birth of their baby with Down's Syndrome. At the time, Dad had just started a new job, the family had only one car which Dad needed to get to work, and they had no close friends or relatives. Mom and Dad struggled through those first years with doctors, agencies, infant stimulation programs, etc. and had no help or support. Now Mom with Dad's help has started a parent group that provides support, resources and information to parents of children with disabilities. Mom and Dad don't want other families to go through what they did in the beginning. They are committed to changing the system as well as providing immediate assistance to families.

Your Secret Assignment: Get two people in the group to help/support you in your situation.

Education Agency

Your Situation: You are the school psychologist. You have been a school psychologist for 15 years in the same school district. You've had a variety of assignments in those 15 years, and you feel as if you know the community. Still, you're frustrated. Your ability to provide services is hampered by lots of paperwork, legal documents, restrictions, time lines and funding cutbacks. You and your school district can't provide all the services that students and their families need. How do you get parents to follow up on your suggestions for medical evaluations, counseling, meetings, etc.? How do you get the people from the Regional Center, Easter Seals, daycare, etc. to keep you informed about the status of your students? For example, one of your students, a 7 year old first grader, is having learning and behavior problems; he just got kicked out of before and after school daycare, and you're sure he's now a latchkey kid. He comes from a large family, Mom and Dad are divorced. Three of his brothers live with Dad in a nearby city, and 3 of them live with the student and his Mom. The family cannot afford counseling. Many of the students and their families have similar problems. You want to see some "action" for students and their families. They need help now!

Your Secret Assignment: Get two people in the group to help/support you in your situation.

Social Services Agency

Your Situation: You are a case worker for a social service agency. Your agency:

- serves high risk youth and their families,
- offers mental health services,
- provides therapy,
- provides respite care.

You are new to the job and only have a vague idea of what other agencies do since you've had limited time to investigate programs and services. The eligibility criteria for your clients seem a little confusing even to you, but you're confident that practical experience will make them very clear. Therefore, you are hesitant to offer services, but are still anxious to help.

Your Secret Assignment: Get two people in the group to help/support you in your situation.

Private Nonprofit Agency

Your Situation: You are a community worker for a private nonprofit agency. Your agency:

- serves high risk youths and their families,
- offers daycare facilities,
- provides for latchkey kids,
- provides occupational, physical, and speech therapy.

In order to receive services, children and their families have to meet specific criteria. There is currently a 2-4 week waiting period for screening of applicants and approximately an additional 3 week wait for services. Often services are utilized sporadically since your agency has no money to offer transportation to and from an "edge of town" location. Because of decreasing funding, the agency is being forced to look to the community for resources. This is particularly difficult since the agency is still recovering from a split with its parent agency ten years ago. Still, it's time to reach out and you are anxious to offer what services you can.

Your Secret Assignment: Get two people in the group to help/support you in your situation.

Interagency Collaboration
Activity/Handout/Overhead 4
Large Group Brainstorming and
Information Sharing
10 minutes

Interagency Collaboration

Barriers	Benefits
Competitiveness, negative attitudes	Improves services for children and families
Lack of skill in coordinating	Extends limited resources
Difficulty communicating across disciplines	Improves staff competence and expertise
Lack of monitoring and evaluation	Establishes a forum for joint planning and problem solving
Inadequate knowledge about other agencies and programs	Fosters a family focused service delivery system

Lynch E. and Harrison P. *Interagency collaboration: Making magic happen.* San Diego, CA: Department of Special Education, San Diego State University, 1986

Drouin, C., Brekken, L., Eastman, M., Wolfe, S. *The file drawer: A resource for consultants to community collaborative groups.* Sacramento, CA: Infant/Preschool Special Education Resource Network, 1987

Interagency Collaboration
Activity/Handout 5A, Page 1
Lecturette, Individual Activity
and Large Group Sharing
20 minutes

Parents' Role in Interagency Collaboration:

An Individualized Plan for Success

Circle objective(s) * that capture your interest or best utilize your strengths to achieve the overall goal.

Goal: To ensure equal participation of key parents and parent organizations in the community collaboration process.

Objectives:

1. Assist in developing new ways to meet community needs.
   - help agencies apply for small grants to initiate new efforts.
   - assist in conducting a community needs assessment.
   - call together or serve on a task force to find a solution to a persistent community problem.
   - contact nearby colleges, universities, and inservice training groups to help find new ways to meet community needs.
2. Participate in networking.
   - start an interagency group to share information, keep up the latest research, solve problems.
   - establish an advisory committee. If you chair or are a member of a parent group, invite professionals from a selected agency to a short, friendly, purposeful meeting with something good to eat!
   - be a catalyst in the community. Help people get connected.
   - hold meetings of different agencies.
   - share resources and contacts. Put together a bookmark sized list of the programs, services and phone numbers that you call most often, have it printed, and share it with other parents and professionals.

3. Be responsive to others.

   * acknowledge accomplishments of others. Give positive reinforcement. Send notes; say thank you; give a call.

   * be clear about what you can do and cannot do. All people, programs, agencies have constraints. We all understand limitations, but it is important that they be stated and heard clearly so our reticence is not perceived as being obstructive.

   * follow through on commitments. If you are too busy to do something, don't volunteer. If something is going to be late, let people know.

4. Recognize turf and territorial issues.

   * support an agency's willingness to compromise for the greater good. All communities have spoken or unspoken turf issues among agencies, programs, and sometimes even staff. Working through turf and territorial issues takes time, energy, and patience.

   * make your own motives and goals clear. Be clear about your interest, your role, and your goals so that you don't become one of the turf problems.

   * be sensitive to power and control issues that exist in the community. Be aware of levels of leadership within their organization.

   * abandon your own ego needs. If you want to help agencies work together, find another way to get your needs met! The best collaboration seems to result from giving things away. The group, not the catalyst, must own the idea for it to work.

   * don't give up! Turf and territorial issues are tough to negotiate, but it has been done in other communities.

5. Communicate.

   * expect an interagency group to go through a process of development. As a participant in that group you can expect to go through a process of development as well. Recognize if you are product or process oriented. (The final destination vs. the trip).

   * be prepared for professionals who may not appreciate or are threatened by parents' perspectives. Think about whether you might seek leadership in a group.

- keep internal communication clear. Communicate clearly and fully. Effective communication increases the likelihood that the messages that go back to various agencies are clear and consistent.

- develop or assist in developing print or non-print materials that describe an agency's efforts. A one page description of current interagency efforts, or a written statement of the purpose of an agency group can help publicize the effort while helping group members focus on their purpose and mission.

Activity based on information contained in: Lynch, E. and Harrison, P. *Interagency collaboration: Making magic happen.* San Diego, CA: San Diego State University, 1986.

Parents' Role in Interagency Collaboration: Equal Participation is the Key

Assist in Developing New Ways to Meet Community Needs

Participate in Networking

Be Responsive to Others

Recognize Turf and Territorial Issues

Communicate

Interagency Collaboration
Activity/Handout 6
Individual Activity and Large
Group Sharing
10 minutes

Evaluating Interagency Collaboration

How to Know When it's Working

Ask yourself these questions to evaluate whether or not interagency collaboration is working for you. If your answer to any of these questions is "yes", you're probably doing better than you think.

1. Have you heard any positive comments about the interagency efforts that you are involved in?

2. Can you name one thing that has changed in a positive direction because of the interagency activity?

3. Do you and families in the community know more about programs and services than before?

4. Is there one person that you can call now to help with services that you wouldn't have called before?

5. Would children and families be served better if agencies did work collaboratively in your community?

Source: From *Interagency collaboration: Making magic happen.* by Eleanor W. Lynch and Patrick J. Harrison (San Diego, CA: Department of Special Education, San Diego State University, 1986). Reprinted by permission of the authors.

Interagency Collaboration: The Parents' Role

Summary

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION is a group of professionals, families (parents), and service providers who come together in order to truly share and plan for resources throughout the community.

During this process gaps in services, unnecessary duplications and areas of confusion are often identified and dealt with, resulting in better service for individuals with disabilities and their families.

In developing interagency collaboration it is important to realize that most successful interagency groups have recognizable key components in their collaboration:

* Mission
* Structure
* Membership

When these components are in place, interagency groups are ready to do their work:

* Needs assessment
* Action planning
* Implementation
* Evaluation

Parents and professionals have identified both barriers to and benefits of interagency collaboration.

Barriers	Benefits
Competitiveness, negative attitudes	Improved services for children and families
Lack of skill in coordinating	Extends limited resources
Difficulty communicating across disciplines	Improves staff competence and expertise
Lack of monitoring and evaluation	Establishes a forum for joint planning and problem solving
Inadequate knowledge about other agencies and programs	Fosters a family focused service delivery system

Equal participation is the key to the parents' role in interagency collaboration.

Parents' Role

Assist in Developing New Ways to Meet Community Needs

- assist in needs assessment survey, questionnaire
- be involved in service projects
- serve on a task force
- apply for small grants to initiate new efforts

Participate in Networking

- start an interagency group to share information, solve problems
- establish or join an advisory committee
- be a catalyst - help people get connected
- share resources - put together a bookmark sized or recipe card sized list of programs, services, and most often called phone numbers; have it printed, share it with parents and professionals.

Be Responsive to Others

- acknowledge accomplishments
- be clear about what you can and cannot do
- follow through on commitments

Recognize Turf and Territorial Issues

- support agency's willingness to compromise
- be clear about your role and goals
- be sensitive to power and control issues
- give things away - abandon your own ego needs
- don't give up!

Communicate

- expect an interagency group and yourself as a member of that group to go through a process of development
- use effective communication skills
- develop or assist in developing printed or non-printed materials that describe an agency's efforts.

Bibliography

Books/Magazines/Resources

Drouin, C., Brekken, L., Eastman, M., and Wolfe, S. *The file drawer: A resource for consultants to community collaborative groups.* Sacramento, CA: Infant/Preschool Special Education Resource Network, 1987. (Available from: Infant/Preschool, 650 University Ave., Suite 201, Sacramento, CA 95825).

Georgetown University Child Development Center. *The workbook series for providing services to children with handicaps and their families.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Center, n.d. (Available from: Georgetown University Child Development Center, 3800 Reservoir Road N.W., Washington, DC 20007).

Lynch, E. and Harrison, P. *Interagency collaboration: Making magic happen.* San Diego, CA: San Diego State University, 1986. (Available from: SDSU Foundation, San Diego State University, Department of Special Education, San Diego, CA 92182).

Evaluation

Your responses to the questions/statements below will assist us in improving this module. Please respond to all items. Your participation in this evaluation is completely anonymous. DO NOT place your name anywhere on the evaluation.

Based on a scale of 1 through 10, how much of the information presented was new to you?
_____ 1 is not much new; 10 all new

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. After this session, I am familiar with the concept of interagency collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
2. As a result of this session, I can identify some components of interagency collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
3. This session helped me examine the barriers to and benefits of interagency collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
4. This session made me aware of the roles parents can play in interagency collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Because of this session, I can better evaluate successful interagency collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The material presented was sensitive to all cultural groups.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The material covered information which was appropriate to all handicapping conditions.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The material presented matched my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I will use some of the information/ resources that were introduced.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The instructors did a good job.	1	2	3	4	5

11. Specific suggestions to improve this module:

_____

_____

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